

# HEALTH

## LUPUS

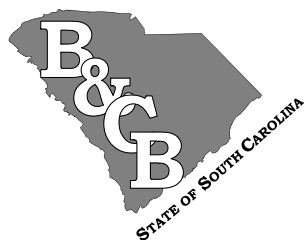
Lupus is a widespread and chronic (lifelong) autoimmune disease that, for unknown reasons, causes the immune system to attack the body's own tissue and organs, including the joints, kidneys, heart, lungs, brain, blood or skin. The immune system normally protects the body against viruses, bacteria and other foreign materials. In an autoimmune disease like lupus, the immune system loses its ability to tell the difference between foreign substances and its own cells and tissue. The immune system then makes antibodies directed against "self."

### Symptoms of Lupus

Symptoms of lupus often mimic other less serious illnesses. Lupus can go into periods where symptoms are not present, called remission. The following lists the most common symptoms of lupus and the percentage of lupus patients who experience them

Symptoms	Percentage	Symptoms	Percentage
Achy joints (arthralgia)	95%	Kidney involvement	50%
Frequent fevers of more than 100 degrees F.	90%	Pain in the chest on deep breathing (pleurisy)	45%
Arthritis (swollen joints)	90%	Butterfly-shaped rash across the cheek and nose	42%
Prolonged or extreme fatigue	81%	Sun or light sensitivity (photosensitivity)	30%
Skin rashes	74%	Hair loss	27%
Anemia	71%	Raynaud's phenomenon	17%

Based on the results of several nationwide telephone surveys, the Lupus Foundation of America estimates that approximately 1,400,000 Americans have a form of the disease. Despite the fact that lupus can affect men and women of all ages, lupus occurs 10 to 15 times more frequently among adult females than adult males. Lupus develops most often between ages 15 and 44. Lupus is two to three times more common among African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans.



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